



# NEWS RELEASE

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United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Gutknecht Recognizes \$9,584,000 Loan to Tri-County Electric Cooperative**

*Loan will serve eight counties in southern Minnesota and Northern Iowa*

RUSHFORD, Minn., April 21 – U.S. Congressman Gil Gutknecht visited Tri-County Electric Cooperative in Rushford, Minn., today to recognize a \$9,584,000 USDA Rural Development loan recently awarded to the cooperative.

The loan will be used to serve 800 new consumers, construct 62 miles of new distribution line, and make other system improvements.

"Modern electrical distribution systems are essential to rural development and economic growth in Southern Minnesota," Gutknecht said. "I want to thank Steve Wenzel and his staff at Rural Development for their outstanding efforts on behalf of the people who need this electricity."

Counties served include: **Fillmore, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, and Winona** in Minnesota and **Allamakee, Howard and Winneshiek** in Iowa.

"On behalf of our Board of Directors and members, Tri-County Electric Cooperative is very appreciative of the Rural Development loan that will be used primarily for system improvements, involving line conversions and replacements," said Brian Krambeer, President/CEO. "With a density of less than four members per mile of line, these important loan funds will be used to carry on our cooperative mission to enhance the reliability of our electric distribution system for our membership."

Tri-County Electric Cooperative was founded in 1936 by local citizens. Rural Development's electric programs make insured loans and guarantees of loans to nonprofit and cooperative associations, public bodies, and other utilities. The agency also began making electric loans in 1936.

"USDA Rural Development has a storied history of bringing electricity to rural areas," said Steve Wenzel, State Director of USDA Rural Development in Minnesota. "President Bush's rural policy calls for funding of basic infrastructure projects in rural areas. It is great to partner with Tri-County Electric Cooperative in improving the quality of life and creating economic opportunity in rural southern Minnesota and northern Iowa."

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD).

Tri-County Electric Cooperative is a member-owned electric distribution cooperative serving three counties in Minnesota including Winona, Houston and Fillmore and parts of Olmsted and Mower counties in Minnesota and Howard, Winneshiek and Allamakee counties in Iowa. It provides electricity to more than 12,000 services and eight communities in the area. Tri-County Electric is a Touchstone Energy cooperative.

Since 2001, USDA Rural Development has invested about \$2.5 billion throughout Minnesota. The agency's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Rural Development provides investment and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure

For more information on USDA Rural Development, visit [www.rurdev.usda.gov/mn](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mn), or call the office in Faribault (507) 334-2206 or Austin (507) 437-8247.

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